POLYGALA ARVENSIS, CHINENSIS & GLOMERATA

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The name *Polygala chinensis* L. is usually applied to the small greenish-yellow-flowered species of *Polygala* that is common in India. This is a misidentification. There is no reason to suppose that the specimen labelled *chinensis* in the Linnaean herbarium (sheet 882.26 of the Savage catalogue) is not the type specimen. It fits perfectly with Linnaeus's description and no synonymy was quoted in the protologue.

This specimen in the Linnaean herbarium is the plant that we now know as *P. glomerata* Lour. Examination of herbarium material of this species shows that it is either an annual or a perennial that flowers in its first year. There is characteristically an erect main stem and a few upcurving lateral branches from the axils of the lowermost leaves. The leaves of the lateral branches are distinctly shorter and actually and relatively broader than those of the main stem. It is two of these lateral branches that form the Linnaean specimen.

The identification of *P. chinensis* with *P. glomerata* is not new, as I found when I started to get together information on *P. glomerata*. Merrill had already reduced it to synonymy under *P. chinensis* L. (see Trans. Amer. Phil. Soc. 24, 2: 228, 1935). Curiously, however, he discussed the identity of the two type specimens without any hint that the name *P. chinensis* was being currently misapplied. Perhaps as a result of this, later authors (e.g. Gagnepain in Lecomte, Fl. Gén. Ind.-Chine, Suppl. 1: 234, 1939; Backer & Bakh. f., Fl. Java 1: 198, 1963; Adema in Blumea 14: 255, 1966) have continued to use *P. chinensis* for the plant which is manifestly different from *P. glomerata*.

In its misused sense *P. chinensis* is usually accompanied by the synonym *P. arvensis* Willd. This appears to be the correct name for the small prostrate yellow-flowered plant.

There is not too much difficulty in adopting *P. arvensis* Willd. for *P. chinensis* auctt. non Linn. There is, however, a clear certainty of confusion if we adopt *P. chinensis* L. for *P. glomerata* Lour. Unless the synonym is cited one will never know which plant is intended by "*P. chinensis*".

Article 69 of the International Code says "A name is to be rejected if it is used in different senses and so has become a long persistent source of error". This does not strictly give a mandate for rejecting a name that *will become* a source of error. However, I have no intention of being the person to start such a confusion. I therefore recommend that the two plants concerned be known as *P. glomerata* Lour. and *P. arvensis* Willd. and that the name *P. chinensis* L. be abandoned. The citations and some references are set out below: fuller synonymy is given by Adema (in Blumea 14: 253–276, 1966).

Polygala glomerata Lour., Fl. Coch. 426 (1790), ed. Willd. 2: 518 (1793); Bennett in Hook. fil., Fl. Brit. Ind. 1: 206 (1872); Gagnep. in Lecomte, Fl. Gén. Indo-Chine, Suppl. 1, 2: 234 (1939); Backer & Bakh. f., Fl. Java 1: 198 (1963); Adema in Blumea 14: 270 (1966).

Type: China, near Canton, *Loureiro* (P, fide Merrill, n.v.)

Syn.: *P. chinensis* L., Sp. Pl. 704 (1753); Merrill in Trans. Amer. Phil. Soc. 24, 2: 228 (1935)—nomen rejic.

P. densiflora Bl., Bijdr. Fl. Ned. Ind. 59 (1825); Hassk. in Miq., Ann. Mus. Bot. Lugd. Bat. 1: 166 (1864); Chodat in Mém. Soc. Phys. Hist. Nat. Genève, 31 (2, no. 2): 380 (1893—incl. *P. glomerata* Lour.)

Polygala arvensis Willd., Sp. Pl. 3, 2: 876 (1802); Hassk. in Miq., Ann. Mus. Bot. Lugd. Bat. 1: 162 (1864).

Type: India orientali (herb. Willdenow Cat. no. 12953—n.v.).

Syn.: *P. chinensis* auctt.; Bennett in Hook. f., Fl. Brit. Ind. 1: 204 (1872); Chodat in Mém. Soc. Phys. Hist. Nat. Genève, 31 (2, no. 2): 385 (1893); Gagnep. in Lecomte, Fl. Gen. Indo-Chine, Suppl. 1, 2: 234 (1939); Backer & Bakh. f., Fl. Java 1: 198 (1963); Adema in Blumea, 14: 269 (1966)—non L.

P. chinensis forma *arvensis* (Willd.) Chodat in Mém. Soc. Phys. Hist. Nat. Genève 31 (2, no. 2): 386 (1893).